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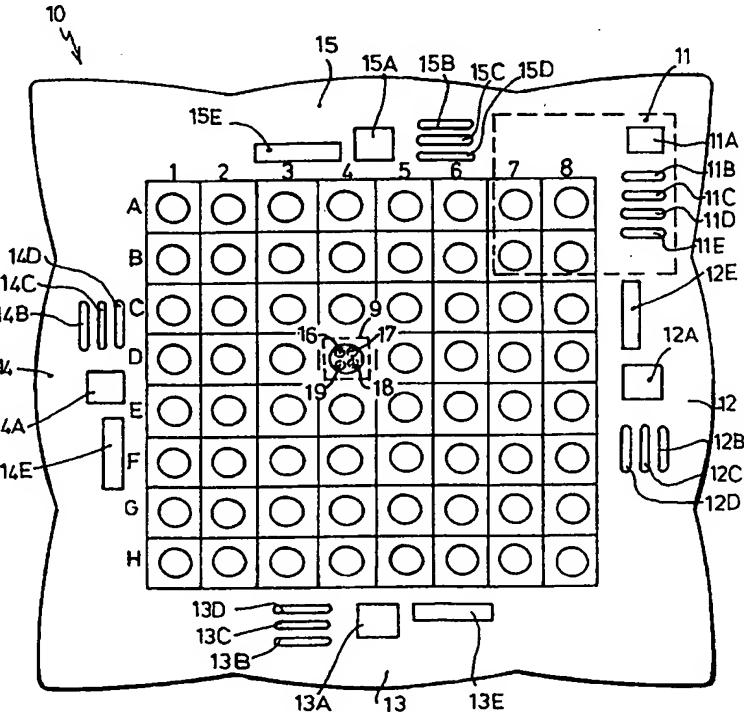
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(54) Title: COMPUTER GAME

(57) Abstract

Computer game provided with a games board (10) and a computer (11) connected thereto for controlling game facets. The games board has a first number of side edges (12-15) and a second number of playing areas. Each playing area contains an activation element (20) connected with the computer, in which operating the activation element (20) activates or deactivates a certain game facet, and has mark device (9) for separately displaying an equal number of distinctive marks (16-19) as side edges. Each mark device being connected to the corresponding activation element and to the computer and is operable by the activation element and/or the computer. Each side edge containing a third number of operating means (A-D) for operating the computer for activating or deactivating certain game facets.



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Computer game

The present invention relates to a computer game provided with a games' board and a computer connected thereto for controlling game facets.

5 Nowadays there are numerous computer games or computer - assisted games having a great variety of subjects and games to be played on a games' board. It is an object of the present invention to provide an alternative computer game with which in a simple manner the game can be played
10 by one or more persons.

For this purpose the invention provides a computer game provided with a games' board and a compute connected thereto for controlling game facets, said games' board
15 having a first number of side edges and a second number of playing areas, each playing area containing an activation element connected with the computer, in which operating the activation element activates or deactivates a certain game facet, and having a mark device for separately
20 displaying an equal number of distinctive marks as side edges, each mark device being connected to the corresponding activation element and to the computer and being operable by the activation element and/or the computer, each side edge containing a third number of
25 operating means for operating the computer for activating or deactivating certain game facets. As each playing area can display a number of distinctive marks, a game assisted by the computer or a computer chip can be played on the games' board by a same number of players as the number of
30 distinctive marks. The game to be played depends on the programme loaded in the computer or the chip in which

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certain game facets can be activated or deactivated by operating the activation elements and/or the operating means.

5 The games' board can be displayed on a touch-sensitive screen, each activation element being a part of the screen, i.e. a displayed playing area.

10 Alternatively, the games' board is a physical games' board, each activation element being a push-button.

15 Various embodiments of a computer game according to the present invention will be described by way of example on the basis of the figure, the figure schematically representing a top view of a physical games' board with push-buttons and a computer integrated therein.

20 The present invention will be described on the basis of a games' board with four side edges and four distinctive marks per playing area, so that four players can play a game, it being so that the computer can replace one or more players, but it will be clear that the games' board can have three, five or more side edges, and that each playing area can therefore display three, five or more - 25 distinctive marks. In addition, the computer game according to the invention will be elucidated on the basis of a "Go"-like game to be played by four players, it being clear, however, that depending on the computer program, i.e. the software, the computer game is suitable for 30 playing one or more other games.

35 The computer game shown in the figure is provided with a games' board 10 and a computer 11 integrated therein for controlling certain game facets. Although the computer is shown as being integrated in the games' board, it can also be a separate unit which is connected to the games' board via a line.

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The games' board 10 has a first number of side edges 12, 13, 14 and 15, in this embodiment four, and a second number of playing areas A1 to H8, in this embodiment 64, which are disposed in a square. The number of playing 5 areas as well as the configuration formed by them is variable. Along with a square configuration, a round, a triangular or cross-shaped one is possible, too, depending on the game to be played.

10 Each playing area contains a push-button 20 which is connected to the computer 11. Furthermore, each playing area has a mark device 9 for separately displaying an equal number of distinctive marks as there are side edges, i.e. four distinctive marks 16, 17, 18, 19 in the 15 exemplary embodiment shown. Each mark device 9 is connected to the corresponding push-button and to the computer 11, in which, depending on the operation of the push-button and/or the computer 11, the mark device displays one of the distinctive marks.

20 In the exemplary embodiment shown each push-button is round and disposed in a square playing area. However, the present invention is not restricted to this and the push-button as well as the playing area can, for instance, have any given shape, and the playing area can also be formed 25 by the push-button itself, for example.

Letters, numerals, symbols, projecting flags or other 30 figures can be used as distinctive mark, but a colour that can be clearly seen from all side edges of the games' board, regardless of the direction of perception is preferably used.

A further improvement of the perceptibility of the distinctive mark is obtained in that the mark device contains 35 a fluorescent element, for instance a lamp or a LED for displaying the colour in a light emitting manner. For

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displaying four colours, for example, a mark device with one lamp and four colour filters or LED's, or with a four-tone LED, or with two two-tone LED's, or with one three-tone and one single-tone LED can be used.

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A compact and user-friendly computer game can be obtained by manufacturing each push-button of transparent material and placing the corresponding fluorescent element under the push-button.

10

Each side edge 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the games' board 10 contains a third number of operating means per side edge, four in the exemplary embodiment, referred to as A, B, C and D, for operating the computer in order to activate or deactivate certain game facets. The operating means, such as push-buttons, touch controls or switches, for instance, can have a start, a reset, a help, a correction and an o.k. or an acknowledge function. Likewise the side edges can have operating means for selecting certain computer 15 functions, such as selecting the game type, the standard of the game, giving help service and the like. Preferably suchlike operating means 11A to 11E are arranged on a central operating position on the games' board 10, as 20 shown in the figure.

25

So as to provide each player with game information, such as the current score, the indication who's turn it is, a suggestion for a move and so on, every side edge 12, 13, 14 and 15 is provided with a display screen 12E, 13E, 14E 30 and 15E, for instance a LCD screen for displaying game information.

Preferably at least one of the operation devices 12A, 13A, 35 14A and 15A of each side edge is provided with a mark belonging to one distinctive mark of a playing area, to specify which side edge, i.e. which players belong to which mark. Preferably this one operating means is a

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transparent push-button under which there is a fluorescent element, for example an LED, with the colour in question.

After this an exemplary operation of the computer game according to the present invention will be elucidated on the basis of a "Go"-like game to be played by four players. The four side edges 12, 13, 14 and 15 correspond to the four players, respectively. In this example the fluorescent colours red, blue, yellow and green, respectively, are used as distinctive marks. Each playing area then contains a mark device 9, with, in this case, four LED's 17, 18, 19 and 16 for emitting red, blue, yellow and green lights, respectively.

When switching on the games' board 10, by operating push-button 11A, for instance, the computer 10 activates all mark devices 9 of all playing areas A1 to H8 to allow each colour to emit light for a short period in order to check whether there are any defective LED's. By pressing button 11B the game type can be selected, which game type appears on the LCD screens 12E to 15E. By operating the operating means 11C to 11E only human players can be selected, although the computer can play for a player, the game level or playing strength of the computer then being selected too.

Upon starting the game the computer 11 causes the LED's in the push-buttons 12A to 15A to flash and selects at random which player may commence. This player's LED, say the "red" player 12, keeps on flashing, whereas those of the other players go out. In the meantime the computer 11 has set up the initial playing situation on the games' board 10. As a result of the respective LED lighting up, the playing area D4 is red, D5 green, E4 blue and E5 yellow in this initial situation. It is the turn of the "red" player 12 and he presses a push-button to trap one of the other players. The red player 12 presses the push-button

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of playing area D3. The computer 11 recognizes this as an incorrect move and indicates this by means of a sound and/or message on the LCD screen 12E. Subsequently the red player 12 works the operating means with the help function 5 and the computer causes the playing areas D6, F6 and F4 to flash in red in order to show which moves can be made. The red player 12 presses the press-button of playing area F4, the LED of which goes on flashing, while the red LED's of the other playing areas are turned off. The red player 12 10 acknowledges his move by pushing his press-button 12A, after which the red LED of playing area F4 then goes on continuously, and the blue LED of E4 is turned off, while the red LED of E4 is turned on continuously. By his move the red player has thus "trapped" the blue player. The 15 switch from the red player's 12 turn to that of the blue player 13 is indicated by the red LED under press-button 12A going out, and the blue LED under press-button 13A flashing. As the blue player 13 cannot make a move with which to trap another player, the computer 11 permits him 20 to occupy a playing area which borders one of the playing areas already held. The blue player 13 can thus occupy playing area C3, C4, C5, C6, D6, E6, F6, F5, G5, G4, G3, G3, F3, E3 or D3 by pressing the corresponding press- 25 button and then acknowledging his move by pressing press- button 13A. The players can thus in turn occupy a playing area until at the end of the game all the playing areas are taken. The computer 11 then calculates which player holds the most playing areas and indicates that he is the 30 winner by causing the LED (12A to 15A) in question to flash and/or by displaying a message on the LCD screen, accompanied if so desired by a suitable tune.

During the game it is possible for a player to correct a move, by operating an operating means with a correction 35 function. A time limit can be linked to this correction, so that correction is permitted only up until the moment the following player acknowledges his move by operating

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press-button A, for instance. In addition, returning to the initial situation (reset) whilst playing the current game situation is possible; this can take place per move or in one go. For this purpose the computer game can be 5 provided with one single operating means which contains both above-mentioned reset functions or by two separate operating means, each with one of the reset functions. By returning per move, one can return to a prior game situation from where the game can be resumed.

10

Although the invention has been described on the basis of the example described above, it will be clear that a computer game according to the present invention can have numerous other embodiments, so that a large number of 15 games can be played. In addition, the games' board can be displayed on a touch-sensitive screen, so that touching a part of the screen which forms the playing area having the same consequences as pressing a press-button.

20

Claims

1. Computer game provided with a games' board and a computer connected thereto for controlling game facets, said games' board having a first number of side edges and a second number of playing areas, each playing area containing an activation element connected with the computer, in which operating the activation element activates or deactivates a certain game facet, and having mark device for separately displaying an equal number of distinctive marks as side edges, each mark device being connected to the corresponding activation element and to the computer and being operable by the activation element and/or the computer, each side edge containing a third number of operating means for operating the computer for activating or deactivating certain game facets.
- 15 2. Computer game according to claim 1, in which the games' board is displayed on a touch-sensitive screen and each activation element is part of the screen.
- 20 3. Computer game according to claim 1, in which the activation element is a push-button.
4. Computer game according to claim 1, 2 or 3, in which each mark device has as distinctive mark a separate colour.
- 25 5. Computer game according to claim 4, in which each mark device has a fluorescent element for displaying a distinctive mark.
- 30 6. Computer game according to claim 3 and 5, in which each push-button is transparent and the corresponding fluorescent element is located under the push-button.

7. Computer game according to any one of the preceding claims, in which at least one of the operating means of each side edge contains a mark belonging to one distinctive mark of the game area.

5

8. Computer game according to claim 7, in which the at least one operating means is a transparent push-button, the distinctive mark is a fluorescent colour, and an element fluorescing in said colour is located under the at 10 least one operating means.

9. Computer game according to any one of the preceding claims, in which each side edge contains a reproduction part for displaying game data.

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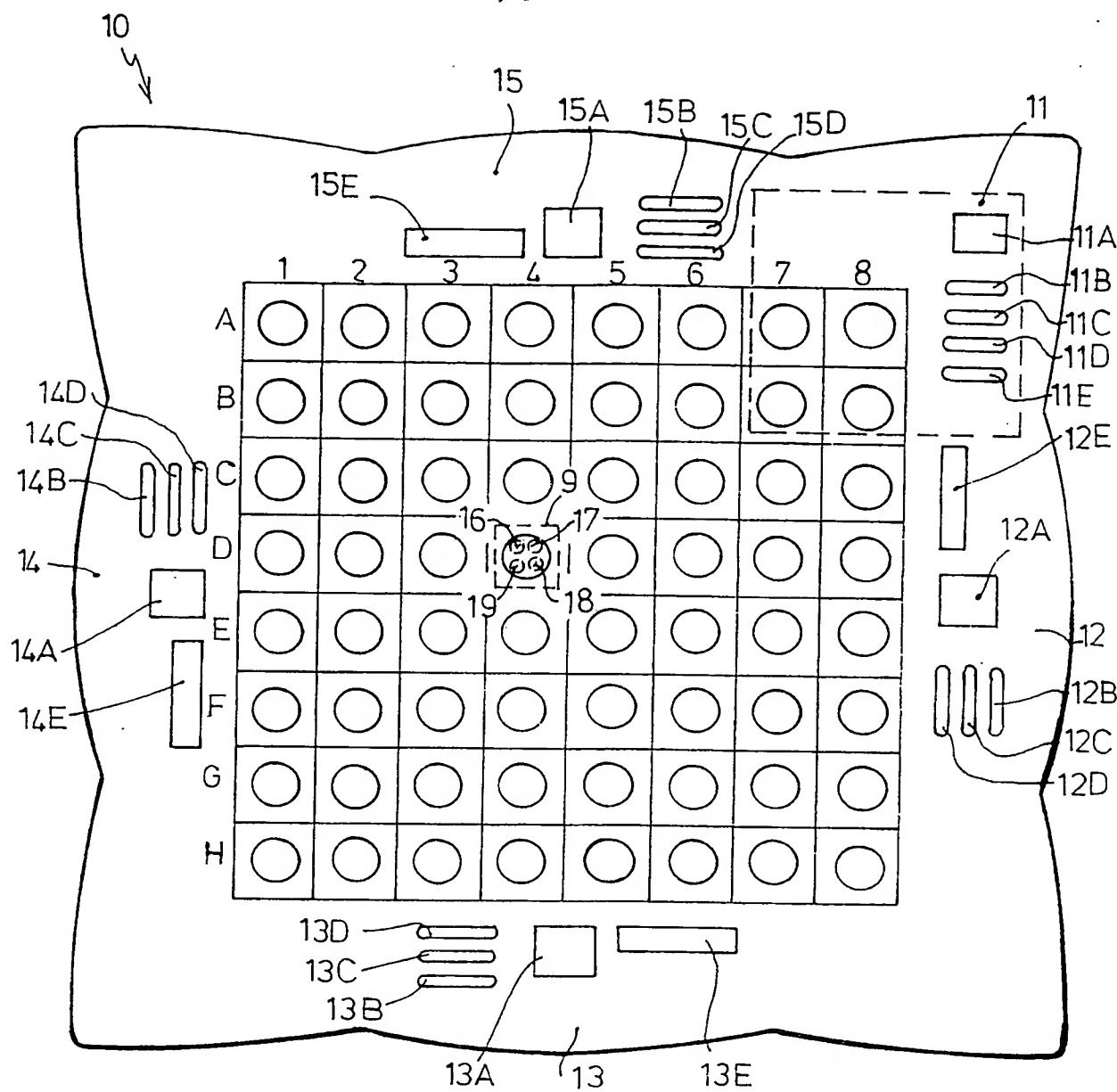


FIG. 1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/NL 97/00589

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A63F3/02

According to International Patent Classification(IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 A63F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Y	US 3 888 491 A (BERNARD ET AL.) 10 June 1975 see column 3, line 49 - line 61 ---	1-9
A	GB 2 097 265 A (HOWARD ET AL.) 3 November 1982 see claims 1,10-12 ---	1
A	US 3 697 076 A (VOGEL) 10 October 1972 see column 4, line 11 - line 15 ---	1
A	FR 2 625 344 A (PARENTI) 30 June 1989 see page 3, line 16 - line 23 ---	1,2
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Information on patent family members

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